



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**COMMISSION ON HIV**



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# WOMEN'S CAUCUS

## Virtual Meeting

**Monday, January 22, 2024** \*meeting rescheduled  
from 1/15 due to MLK, Jr. holiday  
**2:00-4:00pm (PST)**

Agenda and meeting materials will be posted on  
<http://hiv.lacounty.gov/Meetings> \*Other Meetings

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## CODE OF CONDUCT

The Commission on HIV welcomes commissioners, guests, and the public into a space where people of all opinions and backgrounds are able to contribute. In this space, we challenge ourselves to be self-reflective and committed to an ongoing understanding of each other and the complex intersectionality of the lives we live. We create a safe environment where we celebrate differences while striving for consensus in the fights against our common enemies: HIV and STDs. We build trust in each other by having honest, respectful, and productive conversations. As a result, the Commission has adopted and is consistently committed to implementing the following guidelines for Commission, committee, and associated meetings.

**All participants and stakeholders should adhere to the following:**

- 1) We approach all our interactions with compassion, respect, and transparency.**
- 2) We respect others' time by starting and ending meetings on time, being punctual, and staying present.**
- 3) We listen with intent, avoid interrupting others, and elevate each other's voices.**
- 4) We encourage all to bring forth ideas for discussion, community planning, and consensus.**
- 5) We focus on the issue, not the person raising the issue.**
- 6) Be flexible, open-minded, and solution-focused.**
- 7) We give and accept respectful and constructive feedback.**
- 8) We keep all issues on the table (no "hidden agendas"), avoid monopolizing discussions and minimize side conversations.**
- 9) We have no place in our deliberations for racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and other discriminatory statements, and "-isms" including misogyny, ableism, and ageism.**
- 10) We give ourselves permission to learn from our mistakes.**

In response to violation of the Code of Conduct which results in meeting disruption, Include provisions of SB 1100 which states in part, ". . . authorize the presiding member of the legislative body conducting a meeting or their designee to remove, or cause the removal of, an individual for disrupting the meeting . . . . Removal to be preceded by a warning to the individual by the presiding member of the legislative body or their designee that the individual's behavior is disrupting the meeting and that the individual's failure to cease their behavior may result in their removal." Complaints related to internal Commission matters such as alleged violation of the Code of Conduct or other disputes among members are addressed and resolved in adherence to Policy/Procedure #08.3302." (Commission Bylaws, Article VII, Section 4.)



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# WOMEN'S CAUCUS

## Meeting Agenda

Monday, January 22, 2024 @ 2:00PM-4:00PM

### To Join:

<https://lacountyboardofsupervisors.webex.com/lacountyboardofsupervisors/j.php?MTID=m356fc5dded6af43135a5e3521e5b3861>

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- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. WELCOME + INTRODUCTIONS + CHECK-IN  | 2:00 PM – 2:05 PM |
| 2. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORT   | 2:05 PM – 2:10 PM |
| • Operational and Programmatic Updates   |                   |
| 3. CO-CHAIR'S REPORT   | 2:10 PM – 2:25 PM |
| • 2024 Co-Chairs Open Nominations & Elections  |                   |
| • Aging Caucus Collaboration   |                   |
| 4. DISCUSSION  | 2:25 PM – 3:45 PM |
| • DHSP Educational Materials Re: Preventing HIV Transmission During Pregnancy and Infant Feeding   REVIEW & FEEDBACK |                   |
| • 2024 Workplan   PLANNING   |                   |
| ○ Update/follow up 2019 recommendations re: women-centered programming & services                                    |                   |
| ○ Virtual Lunch & Learns   |                   |
| ○ Aging Caucus Collaboration   |                   |
| 5. MEETING RECAP + NEXT MEETING AGENDA   | 3:45 PM – 3:50 PM |
| 6. PUBLIC COMMENT + ANNOUNCEMENTS  | 3:50 PM – 4:00 PM |
| 7. ADJOURNMENT   | 4:00 PM           |



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**COMMISSION ON HIV**



**WOMEN'S CAUCUS**  
**October 16, 2023 Virtual Meeting Summary**

**Welcome & Introductions.** The Caucus Co-Chairs, Dr. Mikhaela Cielo and Shary Alonzo welcomed the members and led introductions.

**Executive Director/Staff Report.**

- Cheryl Barrit, MPIA, Executive Director, shared upcoming COH-related activities to include inviting community members to provide public comment at the upcoming October 17, 2023 Board of Supervisor's (BOS) meeting to champion efforts around the County's STI response.
- C. Barrit shared DHSP's Customer Support Program for people living with HIV requiring assistance in accessing HIV services and for those who are experiencing challenges in navigating the HIV system of care.
- Lastly, C. Barrit reminded the Caucus of the upcoming partnership with Dr. Opara which includes an October 18, 2023 dinner and conversation with both Women's Caucus and Black Caucus leadership followed by the October 19, 2023 lecture as part of the UCLA Luskin Lecture Series on "Approaching Substance Use Prevention by Harnessing Black Girls' Strengths."

**Co-Chair's Report.**

- Dr. Cielo referred to C. Barrit's reminder regarding Dr. Opara.
- Dr. Cielo reported that the co-chairs will be meeting with the Aging Caucus leadership on October 23, 2023 to discuss opportunities for collaboration to address women living with HIV & aging.
- 2024 Co-Chairs nominations opened. Arlene Frames, Shary Alonzo, Dr. Mikhaela Cielo and Robin Barkins were nominated. Nominations remain open until the start of elections which will take place at the January 2024 Caucus meeting.

**Presentation.**

- Natalie Sanchez and Jazmin Rojano (LAFAN) presented Episode 1 of its newly released ["Confessions: HIV+ Women Podcast"](#), a podcast about Latina women with HIV and their journeys.
- Additional episodes will be presented at future Caucus meetings.

## **Discussion.**

- The Caucus continued reviewing its 2019 recommendations with focus on women-centered programming and received follow-up information from Paulina Zamudio (DHSP):
  - Two (2) Request for Proposals (RFPs) were released for Childcare and Transportation. 25 agencies were funded in response to the Transportation RFP. An open competitive bid was released for the Childcare RFP with an extended timeline. Only one agency responded but did not meet the requirement as they did not provide RWP-services.
    - ✓ A request was made to submit the childcare survey again to garner more support for a Childcare RFP.
  - A new agency – the Salvation Army – was awarded funding for transitional housing for families.
  - The Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) program is open to all eligible persons living with HIV. EFA can be accessed through Benefit Specialist and MCC team members at either APLA or Alliance for Housing and Healing and effective November 1, 2023, access will be expanded to housing specialists.
  - DHSP is working with HOPWA and partner agencies to bring in housing specialists via the Salvation Army.
  - As a reminder, DHSP does not fund substance use services as they are funded via the County's Substance Abuse and Prevention Control Unit.
  - A collaboration is in process w/ Roxanne Lewis on putting together a resource directory for women-centered programming and services, updates forthcoming. It was clarified that DHSP does not fund women-specific clinics and that LAFAN, AHF and Altamed provides most of the women-related HIV care.
  - DHSP is working with Rescue Agency on a Ryan White Program marketing campaign to launch December 1<sup>st</sup> in commemoration of World AIDS Day.
  - DHSP is working with DPH to fund street teams to provide medical services.
  - DHSP continues to fund Being Alive's Buddy Program however the COH is looking into reviving the service category for Peer Support via non-medical psychosocial support services.
- P. Zamudio asked the group to think of what services and programs dedicated to cis women they would like to see in 2024 and will take back to DHSP's evaluation team for RFB consideration.
- The group inquired whether all contracted agencies must have established Consumer Advisory Boards (CABs) to which P. Zamudio responded that they do not and that only vulnerable population contracted agencies must have CABs. The group requested that all contracted agencies be required to establish CABs. P. Zamudio indicated that all agencies can establish CABs regardless of whether it is contractually mandated.

## **2024 Workplan | PLANNING.**

- Discussions regarding women-centered programming and services will continue as part of the 2024 workplan.

## **Meeting Recap & Next Meeting Agenda**

- Caucus continues to meet quarterly; next meeting will be in January 2024; date to be determined due to the MLK, Jr. holiday.
- 2024 elections
- 2024 workplan development

**Public Comment & Announcements.**

- Lilieth Conolly & Arlene Frames announced their participation in AIDSWatch and encouraged folx to participate. Both members also encouraged folx to submit public comment and expressed the power of advocacy via public comments at BOS meetings.



### What is perinatal transmission of HIV?

Perinatal transmission of HIV is when HIV is passed from a person with HIV to their child during pregnancy, childbirth (also called labor and delivery), or breastfeeding/chestfeeding (through breast milk). The use of HIV medicines, also known as antiretrovirals, and other strategies have helped to lower the rate of perinatal transmission of HIV to 1% or less in the United States and Europe.

### How do HIV medicines prevent perinatal transmission of HIV?

HIV medicines, also known as antiretroviral therapy (ART), are used to treat HIV. Pregnant people with HIV should take HIV medicines as prescribed to reduce the risk of perinatal transmission of HIV. The earlier HIV medicines are started, the more effective they are at preventing perinatal transmission of HIV. People with HIV who are trying to conceive should make sure to start HIV medicines before they become pregnant and continue throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding to prevent perinatal transmission. HIV medicines also protect the birthing parent's health when taken at all times.

HIV medicines, when taken as prescribed, prevent HIV from multiplying and reduce viral load. An undetectable viral load is when the level of HIV in the blood is too low to be detected by a viral load test. The risk of perinatal transmission of HIV during pregnancy and childbirth is lowest when a person with HIV has an undetectable viral load. Having an undetectable viral load during pregnancy and throughout breastfeeding/chestfeeding lowers the risk of perinatal transmission of HIV to less than 1%. Maintaining an undetectable viral load also helps keep the parent-to-be remain healthy throughout their life.

After birth, babies born to people with HIV receive medicines to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV. Several factors determine what medicines babies receive and how long they receive the medicines.

### Are HIV medicines safe to use during pregnancy?

HIV medicines are safe to use during pregnancy. HIV medicines do not increase the risk of birth defects. Health care providers discuss the benefits and risks of specific HIV medicines when helping people with HIV decide which medicines to use during pregnancy or while they are trying to conceive. If an individual gets pregnant while on HIV medication, they should stay on that medication unless instructed to change by their health care provider.

### How does HIV impact infant feeding options?

Pregnant people with HIV are encouraged to talk to their medical team about options for feeding their baby after birth. With consistent use of HIV medicine and an undetectable viral load during



pregnancy and throughout breastfeeding/chestfeeding, the risk of transmission to a baby is extremely low: less than 1%, but not zero. Alternatively, properly prepared formula and pasteurized donor human milk from a milk bank are options that completely eliminate the risk of HIV transmission to a baby after birth.

Many new parents with HIV must consider several factors when deciding about infant feeding options after birth. Breastfeeding/chestfeeding has many health benefits for both parent and newborn. Cultural and emotional factors must also be considered. Pressure from family can be a big concern as are worries about unwanted disclosure of someone's HIV status if people question the reasons for using formula. The postpartum period is also a very exhausting experience and adherence to daily medication can be more challenging than usual. Pregnant people with HIV should speak with their health care provider to determine what method of feeding their baby is right for them.

Additionally, babies should not eat food that was pre-chewed by a person with HIV.

### **Are there other ways to prevent perinatal transmission of HIV?**

In people who have a high HIV viral load (more than 1,000 copies/mL) or an unknown viral load near the time of delivery, a cesarean delivery (sometimes called a C-section) can reduce the risk of perinatal transmission. Special medications will also be used during labor and delivery.

### **Where can I find more information?**

This handout is based on fact sheets developed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

- NIH: Preventing Perinatal Transmission of HIV
- CDC: HIV and Perinatal Transmission

For more information on infant feeding:

- The Well Project
- HIVE

Always consult your doctor for the best recommendations for your situation.

For a list of providers in LA County, please see the *Perinatal HIV Specialty Centers Guide* included in the Perinatal HIV Action Kit.





## Women’s Caucus Workplan 2023

Adopted January 23, 2023

**PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:** To identify activities and priorities the Women’s Caucus will lead and advance throughout 2023.

**CRITERIA:** Select activities that 1) represent the core functions of the COH and Caucus, 2) advance the goals of the [2022-2026 Comprehensive HIV Plan \(CHP\)](#), and 3) align with COH staff and member capacities and time commitment.

**CAUCUS RESPONSIBILITIES:** 1) Facilitate dialogue among caucus members, 2) develop caucus voice at the Commission and in the community, 3) provide the caucus perspective on various Commission issues, and 4) cultivate leadership within the caucus membership and consumer community.

| # | GOAL/ACTIVITY  | ACTION STEPS/TASKS   | TIMELINE/<br>DUE DATE | STATUS/COMMENTS   |
|---|--|--|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | <b>2023 Virtual Lunch &amp; Learn Series</b>   | Identify topics centered around women living with and at risk for HIV and STDs to promote community engagement, awareness and education.   | Ongoing               | <p>At its January 23, 2023 meeting, the Caucus suggested the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coping strategies for grief and loss from a positive mindset <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tools and interventions</li> <li>○ Reframing perspective</li> <li>○ Losing identity as result of diagnosis</li> <li>○ Life Coach recommended as speaker</li> <li>○ Be mindful of triggers; focus on coping tools than the trauma</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Psychological Profile of HIV Diagnosis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How diagnosis affects cognition</li> <li>○ How does long term HIV impact the brain</li> <li>○ Refer to Dr. Avendano-Morales for speaker recommendation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| 2 | <b>Women-Centered HIV-Related Programming:</b> <i>Identify programs and services centered around women, assess their effectiveness in meeting the needs of women, provide specific strategies to address gaps.</i> | <p>Psychosocial Support Services<br/>Programmatic Development: Propose recommendations for potential funding opportunities for Psychosocial Support Services through the Division of HIV and STD Programs (DHSP)</p> <p>Childcare Services</p> | Ongoing               | <p>At the November 17, 2022 Caucus meeting, Paulina Zamudio requested feedback from the Caucus to assist in developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a women’s peer support group. She was interested in knowing what elements need to be included and what models can be looked at for guidance.</p> <p>At its January 23, 2023 meeting, the Caucus provided recommendations to Paulina Zamudio for a women’s peer support group.<br/>PZamudio reported that RFPs for childcare is pending the</p>  |

|   |  |  |                |  |
|---|--|--|----------------|--|
|   |  |  |                | <p>final review process by the County’s contracts unit; will provide updates.</p> <p>The Childcare RFA was released 6/8/23.</p>  |
| 3 | <p><b>Women’s Caucus 2019 Recommendations:</b> <i>Review for Updates and Implementation Status</i></p> | <p>Review DHSP’s Response to PP&amp;A Directives which include the Caucus’ recommendations.</p>  | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Review DHSP’s Response for updates and possible revisions to recommendations.</p> <p>Review to take place at the July 2023 Caucus meeting.</p>  |
| 4 | <p><b>Biomedical HIV Prevention for Women</b></p>  | <p>1.Request update from DHSP re: women-centric programming under the new biomedical prevention RFP<br/>2. Plan awareness strategies</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>At its January 23, 2023 meeting, Paulina Zamudio reported that the biomedical HIV prevention work order was released which also requested proposals for programs and services that exclusively cater to cis-women; no proposals were received regarding programming for cis-women, however, three new providers were secured – will provide names of agencies. Paulina indicated that she would provide utilization data for these services in July 2023.</p> <p>Paulina further reported that a PrEP social media marketing campaign that will include women and biomedical HIV prevention will be launched 2023-2024 to support awareness and outreach.</p> |